



Air Force News

News Service

Air Force unfolds \$40 million experiment

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WASHINGTON -- A \$40 million revolutionary experiment will closely examine how the Air Force plans to fight and win wars in the next century.

The Expeditionary Force Experiment, using integrated advanced technologies and exploring new operational concepts, plans to upgrade warfighting capabilities in the first of a series of annual tests. The first will be a two-phase test Sept. 14-26 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

Deployment and employment of live flying operations is the focus of the first phase, with the second phase emphasizing simulated large-scale joint operations.

At the core of the EFX is the Air Force's new Air and Space Command and Control Agency. With headquarters at Langley AFB, Va., the separate agency concentrates warriors at a central location. Integrated command and control links introduced in the experiment, through the use of a forward and rear joint air operations center, will let warfighters plan and adjust missions en route to the area saving time, resources and lives.

The forward joint air operations center is at Eglin. The rear one is at Langley.

According to Maj. Gen. John Hawley, the Air and Space Command and Control Agency commander, "Command and control is the leadership behind the aircraft.

"It's about commanders communicating their intent and decisions to their staff so front-line warfighters know where to go, what to shoot and what weapons to use to carry out the commander's objectives," he said. "EFX tests a way to give commanders near real-time knowledge of what's occurring in the battle space."

The general added that the real-time information will save critical seconds to put plans and forces into motion to win a war.

Hawley said the experiment's command-and-control strategy saves \$3.8 million per joint air operations center deployment and moves 95 percent fewer forces to the front lines.

EFX involves 30 fighter, bomber, reconnaissance and command-and-control aircraft operating in an air expeditionary force mindset. AEF provides rapid, responsive and reliable airpower to commanders in specific areas using air-to-air, air-to-ground, and suppression of enemy air defense capabilities to stop the enemy.

The test scenario at Eglin involves a rouge nation that invades a U.S. ally with little warning. The United States responds with the AEF.

Only American forces are involved in EFX; however, the general explained that joint service participation is needed to measure a successful air campaign. Multiservice people need to work in all air operations centers to

support the joint forces air component commander, or the person in charge in theater.

In the EFX scenario, the Army's 82nd Airborne Division deploys to a bare-base location and secures and defends the air strip until forward troops arrive at the forward air operations center. A naval carrier is also included in the scenario.

Unlike military exercises that focus on training, Hawley said EFX is the right tool to measure potential future warfighting capabilities.

"Experiments test new unproven initiatives, doctrine and equipment that one day may become reality," the general said. "This year our experiments focus on command and control, or C2, the lifeblood of the Air Force."

EFX is part of an overall thrust to closely examine how the Air Force is structured in the future. It is directly linked to Joint Vision 2010, the blueprint for future warfighting and joint operations, and to recent Air Force Scientific Advisory Board recommendations. As for the cost of the experiment, Hawley insists it's money well worth spending.

"EFX is an investment in America's leadership, future and the well-being of its citizens," he said. "It's about moving more information and fewer people to the front lines and getting just the right resources to the right places at the right time."

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